

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 224772

60

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C:JMONTGOMERY

S/S - RGAMBLE

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O P 102338Z SEP 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 224772

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN; PROP, SW

SUBJECT: OPINION SURVEY IN SWEDEN FINANCED BY RFE

1. RFE WASHINGTON HAS CONFIRMED TO DEPARTMENT THAT RFE, BUT NOT RL, HAS A CONTRACT WITH SIFO FOR CONDUCTING A PUBLIC OPINION POLL IN SWEDEN. RFE HAS HAD SEVERAL SUCH CONTRACTS WITH PRIVATE COMMERCIAL POLLSTERS IN VARIOUS WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. RFE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NEVER CLEARED ANY PRIVATE CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUCH COMMERCIAL POLLSTERS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OR WITH U.S. EMBASSIES IN THE COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE POLLING WAS CONDUCTED. RFE ASSERTS THAT AS AN INDEPENDENT RADIO ENTERPRISE, IT HAS THE RIGHT TO ENTER INTO SUCH CONTRACTS IN ANY "OPEN SOCIETY" COUNTRY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 224772

WITHOUT CONSULTATION.

2. THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT IT HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE THE RADIOS TO CLEAR THE HIRING OF COMMERCIAL FIRMS FOR LISTENER SURVEYS CONDUCTED IN WESTERN EUROPE. THE BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING ACT OF 1973 ESTABLISHED BIB AS A PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED BODY WITH AUTHORITY, INTER ALIA, TO GRANT FUNDS TO THE RADIOS, TO REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE RADIOS' MISSION AND OPERATION, AND TO "ASSESS THE QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY OF THEIR BROADCASTING WITHIN THE CONTEXT

OF THE BROAD FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE UNITED STATES." THE ACT DECLARED THE RFE/RL TO BE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST AND AN "INDEPENDENT BROADCAST MEDIA, OPERATING IN A MANNER NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE BROAD FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE US AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS." THE ACT RESTRICTED THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO PROVIDING "THE BOARD WITH SUCH INFORMATION REGARDING THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE US AS THE SECRETARY SHALL DEEM NECESSARY." CONGRESS INTENTIONALLY FOLLOWED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EISENHOWER COMMISSION IN SEEKING TO INSULATE THE RADIOS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND TO PRESCRIBE BIB AUTHORITY OVER RFE/RL IN POLICY RATHER THAN OPERATIONAL TERMS.

3. THUS, UNLESS SUCH POLLING WERE CONSIDERED TO BE "INCONSISTENT WITH THE" BROAD FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE US" - AND WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT SUCH A CASE COULD BE MADE HERE - THERE WOULD BE NO BASIS FOR DEPARTMENT INTERVENTION.

4. THE DEPARTMENT HAS MADE EMBASSY STOCKHOLM'S CONCERNS KNOWN TO THE RADIOS AND TO BIB. BIB'S PRESIDENT DAVID ABSHIRE HAS RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS:

"IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE RIGHT OF RFE TO ENGAGE COMMERCIAL FIRMS FOR SURVEYS RELATED TO LISTENERS OF INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING BE PRESERVED AND ANY CONTRARY EFFORT IS, OF COURSE, AN ATTEMPT AT CENSORSHIP OF LEGITIMATE MEDIA ACTIVITIES. THESE SURVEYS ARE IN NO WAY RELATED TO DEFECTORS, ARE IN THE SPIRIT OF MEDIA PRACTICES WITHIN DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, AND INTERNATIONALLY ARE FULLY IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 224772

ACCORD WITH PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT EXPRESSING THE HOPE FOR THE EXPANSION IN THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION BROADCAST BY RADIO. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER TO ME OF AUGUST 28 HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT OUR GOVERNMENT REJECTS THE MISINFORMATION FROM COMMUNIST MEDIA THAT CIA IS IN ANY WAY RELATED TO ANY ACTIVITY OF RFE OR RL. THE INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING ACT PASSED BY CONGRESS IN 1973 ENSURES THE OPEN FUNDING, CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT,

AND OPEN ACTIVITIES OF RFE AND RL."

5. BY SEPTEL WE ARE SENDING THE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S
AUGUST 28 LETTER TO YOU AND TO ALL EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC
POSTS TOGETHER WITH GUIDANCE FOR PAOS, WHICH YOU MAY DRAW
ON AT YOUR DISCRETION.

6. RFE SPECULATES THAT THE SWEDISH TV ATTACK ON SIFO WAS
DESIGNED TO DISCREDIT SIFO WHICH HAS COMPLETED A POLL RE-
CENTLY ON THE UPCOMING SWEDISH ELECTIONS SHOWING PALME'S

PARTY MAY BE IN TROUBLE. KISSINGER

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NNN

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